



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE SWISS GUARD RECRUITS AND THEIR RELATIVES
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY***

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 7 May 2009

*Egregious Commandant,
Reverend Chaplain,
Dear Swiss Guards and
your dearest families,*

I am glad to be able to welcome you all here in the Apostolic Palace on the occasion of the swearing in of the new Swiss Guard recruits. In particular, I offer my welcome to the new guards and their parents, relatives and friends. I extend a warm greeting to the new commandant Oberts Anrig and I thank him very much for his responsible commitment to the Successor of Peter and to the Church. At the same time, I also thank the chaplain of the guards Mons. de Raemy, who, with deep involvement follows the daily lives of the guards as well as the path of each one's faith.

Dear guards, your service, rendered day and night in the Apostolic Palace and at the external posts to the Vatican City, is highly visible and with certainty also collectively. You will quickly learn the three dimensions that are formed within you like concentric circles: you have the task of protecting the Successor of the Apostle Peter. You carry it out mainly in the Pope's home. You do so in Rome, a city that since the beginning has always been called "the eternal city". Here close to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, where the Pope lives is the heart of the Catholic Church and, where there are the heart and the core, there is also the entire world.

Let us consider first of all the home of the Pope, the Apostolic Palace. You must watch over this home, not only the building itself and its prestigious apartments but more so over the people you will meet and to whom you will do well to treat with courtesy and care. This counts as much for the Pope himself, for the people who live with him and for his collaborators in the Palace, as it does for

his guests. This therefore also applies to the common life with your comrades, those with whom you share your service and who have the same goal, that is, to serve the Pontiff "honourably, loyally and in good faith" and to give, if necessary, your life for him.

We now turn our attention to Rome, the eternal city, that distinguishes itself by its rich history and its culture. Our admiration is not only for the witnesses of Antiquity. In this city, in a certain sense, the faith itself and the prayer of many centuries have evolved into stones and structures. These places welcome us and inspire us to take up the example of countless saints who have lived here. Thanks to them, we may progress in our life of faith.

In the hope that your stay here in Rome may be spiritually and humanly edifying, I assure you of my prayers and I entrust you to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of your Patrons, the Saints Martin and Sebastian, as well as to the Patron Saint of your homeland Brother Klaus Saint Nicholas of Flüe. I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, your families, your friends and to all those who have come to Rome for the occasion of the swearing-in ceremony.

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